

CONTRACTORS HEARD

Oliver-Bangs Firm Explain Status to President.

CAN DIG THE PANAMA DITCH

Visit White House, Where Conference Is Held—Standing to Be Carefully Investigated—Charges Made Only Against Oliver-Bangs Firm

President Roosevelt last evening gave a hearing to William J. Oliver and Anson M. Bangs, who, on January 12, submitted the lowest bid for the contract to construct the Panama Canal. There were present, besides Mr. Oliver and Mr. Bangs, Secretary Taft, Chairman Shonits, of the Canal Commission; Eugene F. Birmingham; H. W. Lindsay, President of the Panama Canal Company; and John F. Wadsworth, a former friend and counsel for the bidders. At the meeting Messrs. Oliver and Bangs produced facts to show themselves financially capable of carrying out the great contract, and also other evidence to demonstrate their responsibility.

The fight against Oliver and Bangs, carried on by the McArthur-Gillespie combination, which submitted the third lowest bid, seems to have centered upon Mr. Bangs. At the conclusion of the conference at the White House, it was announced that a decision in the matter of the award would probably be reached within a few days.

It was said that the canal commission desires to investigate the Oliver-Bangs concern to the very utmost, so that there would be absolutely no question concerning their ability, both financially and otherwise, of carrying on the work of construction. The investigation principally concerns the record of Mr. Bangs, who, it is alleged, failed to honor his contracts and was once implicated in some way in the Savannah River frauds.

May Pick Another Partner.

There will possibly be a curious situation if it is found that Mr. Bangs has not the standing to warrant his being given the contract. It is claimed that if Mr. Bangs should be declared ineligible, the canal commission has the power to permit Mr. Oliver to select some one else who would be entirely satisfactory to be associated with him.

Mr. Oliver, who came here from Knoxville, Tenn., didn't have a moment to himself yesterday until he went to bed last night tired out. No sooner would he start a conversation with one person than he would be interrupted by some one else on business equally important. The contractor is most polite. No matter how hastily he is called away he never gets to excuse himself and say that he will return in a few minutes.

Surrounded by fellow business men, Mr. Oliver spent much of his time yesterday and last evening in the company of the Raleigh Hotel. A reporter for The Washington Herald requested an interview. He drew to one side and began the conversation.

Asked About Charges.

"What do you think of the charges preferred against you by the other contractor?" was asked.

"It's all in the course of human events," he replied. "So far as my good faith is concerned, and my intentions to carry out the undertaking on which we have made a bid, do you suppose I put up a certified check for \$250,000 unless I intended to carry out the details?"

"But, Mr. Oliver, what do you think about—"

"Telegram, telegram, Mr. Oliver," shouted a page boy, and before the question was asked.

WEATHER CONDITIONS.

U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Weather Bureau, Washington, D. C., Jan. 22, 1907—8 p. m.

Special Flood Bulletin.

The Ohio River is falling so far down at Cincinnati, where the maximum stage reached was 62.2 feet, 12.2 feet above flood stage and the highest stage of record, with the exception of the January 4, 1903, and February 10, 1904, which were 64.1 and 71.1 feet, respectively. The cold weather has had some effect in lowering the stage, which will reach Madison and Louisville Tuesday morning with stages of about 56.5 feet to 57 and 63.5 to 61 feet, respectively. No changes from previous forecasts are indicated in the lower river.

The Lower Mississippi river continues steadily, and stages as follows are indicated below Helena within two weeks: Arkansas, 32; Georgia, 48; and Wisconsin, 50 feet, with a prospect of a crest between 51 and 52 feet at the latter place some time later. The stage at St. Louis will reach 49.9 feet, 9.9 feet above flood stage, and at Cairo, 45.6 feet, 6.6 feet above flood stage.

General Forecast.

Pressure is high throughout the country, but a decided fall since Monday morning over the Middle Mississippi Valley is causing some snow in the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Middle and Western Lower Lake region; elsewhere the weather is generally clear, except in Washington and Western Montana, where there are some clouds.

Temperatures have fallen decidedly in the Atlantic States, where they are from 5 to 15 degrees below the seasonal average; in the Middle West, especially in Kansas, Nebraska, and the Lower Missouri and Middle Mississippi valleys, where it is considerably warmer.

There will be snow Tuesday in the Lake region, extending Tuesday night and Wednesday into the Middle Atlantic States and New England. There will also be rain or snow Tuesday in the Upper Ohio Valley, and probably snow Wednesday on the windward shores of the Lower Lakes.

Temperatures will rise in the Atlantic States, and they will fall Tuesday night or Wednesday in the Missouri and Middle Mississippi valleys, and probably on Wednesday in the Upper Ohio Valley.

The winds along the New England and Middle Atlantic coasts will be fresh and variable, becoming southerly; on the South Atlantic coast light to fresh northerly; on the Gulf coast light to fresh northeast to east, and on Lake Michigan fresh and variable, becoming northwesterly.

Steamers departing Tuesday for European ports will have fresh and variable winds, becoming easterly, with fair weather to the Grand Banks.

Local Temperatures.

Midnight, 24; 2 a. m., 30; 4 a. m., 28; 6 a. m., 28; 8 a. m., 34; 10 a. m., 32; 12 noon, 27; 2 p. m., 30; 4 p. m., 24; 6 p. m., 24; 8 p. m., 24; 10 p. m., 22; Maximum, 31; minimum, 22.

Relative humidity—8 a. m., 51; 2 p. m., 41; 8 p. m., 75. Rainfall, trace. Hours of sunshine, 9.3. Per cent of possible sunshine, 100.

Temperature same date last year—Maximum, 63; minimum, 41.

Temperatures in Other Cities.

Temperatures in other cities, together with the amount of rainfall, for the twelve hours ended at 8 p. m. yesterday, are as follows:

	Max.	Min.	8 p. m.	Rain.
Alexandria, N. C.	30	20	31	...
Albany, N. Y.	30	20	31	...
Albany, Ga.	30	20	31	...
Albany, N. J.	30	20	31	...
Boston, Mass.	30	20	31	...
Buffalo, N. Y.	30	20	31	...
Chicago, Ill.	30	20	31	...
Cincinnati, Ohio	30	20	31	...
Cleveland, Ohio	30	20	31	...
Columbus, Ohio	30	20	31	...
Davenport, Iowa	30	20	31	...
Dayton, Ohio	30	20	31	...
Des Moines, Iowa	30	20	31	...
Galveston, Tex.	30	20	31	...
Helena, Mont.	30	20	31	...
Indianapolis, Ind.	30	20	31	...
Jacksonville, Fla.	30	20	31	...
Kansas City, Mo.	30	20	31	...
Little Rock, Ark.	30	20	31	...
Los Angeles, Cal.	30	20	31	...
Memphis, Tenn.	30	20	31	...
Mobile, Ala.	30	20	31	...
New Orleans, La.	30	20	31	...
New York, N. Y.	30	20	31	...
North Platte, Neb.	30	20	31	...
Omaha, Neb.	30	20	31	...
Pittsburg, Pa.	30	20	31	...
Salt Lake City, Utah	30	20	31	...
St. Louis, Mo.	30	20	31	...
St. Paul, Minn.	30	20	31	...
Springfield, Ill.	30	20	31	...
Vicksburg, Miss.	30	20	31	...

tion could be finished. Mr. Oliver had excused himself and was absorbing the contents of the message. He had received three in a bunch.

He is also receiving suggestions from people in all parts of the country, telling him how to build the great trench. The outline of the writer's plan in some of the letters is absolutely absurd, while others are ingeniously thought out, but in most cases complicated beyond any practicality.

A letter was received yesterday by Mr. Oliver suggesting the best way to dig the Panama Canal by means of dynamite. The writer's idea was that all along the cut wells be excavated at different points. When this task had been completed the contractor had to dig the wells to the bottom of the canal, and the great blast would accomplish the work that has been puzzling government officials and others for years. The letter has been placed on file.

Gets Chance to Speak.

Finally Mr. Oliver had another chance to speak to the reporter.

"I do not blame the President in the least for taking time in deciding the contract," he said. "The job is a big one. The question stands to-night just as it did this morning. There has been absolutely no change in the situation. We are anxious for a decision, and, of course, are confident of securing the contract."

Mr. Oliver was then besieged by a dozen others, and was engaged from that time until he finally succeeded in getting to his room for the night. In addition to men looking for subcontracts, Mr. Oliver also has received enough communications from persons applying for positions, and others personally, to organize a small-sized army.

Will Consider Convict Plan.

Harry S. Edwards, a writer and postmaster at Macon, Ga., has written to President Roosevelt and Mr. Oliver suggesting that convict labor from the United States be employed in digging the canal.

"I have not thoroughly considered this plan," Mr. Oliver said yesterday. "To employ convicts on the job would require some time to put the system in working order. Besides, it would necessitate the enactment of special legislation. This plan, however, will be considered."

STEVENS VISITS WASHINGTON.

Declines to Discuss His Appointment by Gov. Hughes.

The Hon. Frederick C. Stevens, State superintendent of public works of New York, and president of the Commercial National Bank of this city, was in Washington yesterday, but left for New York last night. His home is in Astoria, N. Y., but he says that the affairs of the bank bring him so often to Washington that this, too, is his home.

The recent appointment of Mr. Stevens by Gov. Hughes to the position of State superintendent of public works makes Mr. Stevens, it is said, a bigger political power than ever. Under his supervision the greater part of the \$60,000,000 barge canal will be built. Mr. Stevens, however, he declined to discuss the political situation in New York or to express any views on public questions.

STUDENTS NEED NO LICENSE.

Book Dealers Complain Because College Boys Sell Books.

The Commissioners are in receipt of a number of letters from the firm of W. H. Lowdermilk & Co., book dealers, in which they allege that students of the George Washington University, Georgetown University, and Howard University are acting as book agents for out-of-town firms, receiving a commission on all books sold. The firm contends that these students come within the provisions of the law which provide that commission merchants shall pay a tax of \$40 per annum.

License Inspector W. J. Donovan, to whom the matter was referred, yesterday submitted the following report to Assessor E. W. W. Griffin:

"In company with Inspector R. C. Melton, of this office, I investigated the statement of W. H. Lowdermilk & Co. as to the sale of books by the students of the universities mentioned therein by students in the schools, and find that the students confine their transactions strictly to the universities in which they study, and that the students of the universities are not liable to commission merchants' or other license."

FLOOD SUFFERERS APPEAL.

Residents of Kentucky Town Send Telegram to Commissioners.

An appeal for financial aid has been received by the Commissioners from the flood sufferers of Augusta, Ky. Commissioner Macfarland yesterday received the following telegram from T. S. Bradford, mayor of that city:

"Our flood suffering is beyond our financial ability. Will you help us?" Mr. Macfarland said yesterday he would try to receive and transmit any communications that may be made. It is estimated that at least 15,000 people are homeless on account of the flooding of the lower section of Cincinnati and the towns on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River.

FAIL TO IDENTIFY KARL HAU.

Witnesses Unable to Pick Him as Supposed Murderer.

Baden Baden, Germany, Jan. 21.—Karl Hau, the George Washington University professor, who is charged with having murdered his mother-in-law, Frau Molter, which accusation he resolutely denies, was today confronted with persons who had seen the murderer on the day the woman was killed. They failed to identify the prisoner as the man they had seen.

Protest Against Greater Speed.

Protest against increasing the speed of street cars in suburban districts is made to the Commissioners by the Anacostia Citizens' Association, through its secretary, C. A. Burr. Mr. Burr states that owing to the thickly populated section in Anacostia through which the street cars pass the limit of speed should hold as in the city proper.

Don't wait—open a deposit account

Now with the strongest financial institution south of Philadelphia and east of St. Louis.

2 per cent interest on checking accounts.

\$4,500,000 Capital and Surplus.

AMERICAN SECURITY AND TRUST COMPANY

CHARLES J. BELL, President.

Northwest Corner of Fifteenth and Pennsylvania Avenues.

GREAT ARMY READY

President Can Mobilize 13,369,381 Fighting Men.

HAS POWER OF CONSCRIPTION

Interesting Statistics Made Known by the Annual Report of the Military Secretary of the Army—Total Number of Males for Duty in District of Columbia Is 52,000.

In case of need, it is possible for the military authorities, under direction of the President, to mobilize an army of 13,369,381 fighting men, according to the annual report of the Military Secretary of the army on the militia of the country. Since the passage of the militia act by Congress in 1903, the militia of the country has been technically divided into two classes—the organized and reserve militia. According to the report, the organized militia of the District of Columbia and all the States and Territories on December 31, 1906, aggregated 112,390, while the unorganized militia aggregated 13,257,491. The reserve militia is composed of every able-bodied male citizen of the United States, and every foreigner who has declared his intentions of citizenship, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years. By the provisions of the law it is possible for the President to call upon every citizen thus specified, in time of urgent need in war, giving him practically the powers of conscription.

Organized Militia.

The total strength of the organized militia is given as follows: General officers, 46; general staff officers, 387; regimental officers, 2,539; company officers, 5,287; total commissioned officers, 8,339; noncommissioned officers, musicians, privates, &c., 103,551; total officers and men, 112,390. The total number of males available for military duty, but unorganized, in the District is 52,000. The aggregate strength of the organized militia in the District is 1,674.

Since the militia act of 1903 became operative there has been a decrease of over 9 per cent in the total strength of the organized militia, which is due, in part, to the disbandment or re-formation of organizations formerly existing, and in part to the fact that the officers of the militia are not being replaced as fast as they are retiring.

Geographical Divisions.

Atlantic Division—General officers and general staff, 599; engineers, 653; cavalry, 2,469; heavy artillery, 2,176; light artillery, 2,150; machine gun batteries, 114; infantry, 52,225; signal corps, 566; hospital corps, 772; total, 61,628.

Northern Division—General officers and general staff, 290; engineers, 631; cavalry, 741; light artillery, 889; infantry, 26,643; signal corps, 425; hospital corps, 795; total, 30,409.

Southwestern Division—General staff and general officers, 188; engineers, 44; cavalry, 481; heavy artillery, 47; light artillery, 47; infantry, 6,740; signal corps, 104; hospital corps, 104; total, 7,564.

Pacific Division—General officers and general staff, 104; engineers, 104; cavalry, 104; heavy artillery, 104; light artillery, 104; infantry, 104; signal corps, 104; hospital corps, 104; total, 104.

Members, Families, and Guests Hear Diversified Programme.

The Germania Maennerchor entertained its members and their families and guests at a concert, dramatic production, and ball, at the National Rifles' Armory last night. The musical programme, consisting of vocal and instrumental numbers, was rendered by the Maennerchor Orchestra, the male chorus, Frank Genth, and Miss Eva Frank.

The concert part of the programme was followed by the dramatic section presenting E. Christian's song play, "Der Fatalist," book by F. A. Rocker. The various parts in the one-act piece, which immensely pleased the large audience, were taken by Ludwig Deicher, F. A. Rocker, Mrs. Boenigsen, Weber, Mrs. Esche, Lehndorf, Miss Lella M. Helbig, and Fred L. Aue. Miss Ida Ogilvy and Miss Eva Frank accompanied the song parts on the piano, and F. A. Rocker acted as stage manager.

SENATOR FULTON TRIUMPHS.

Defeats Nomination of District Attorney for Oregon.

Senator Fulton has apparently won his fight against the confirmation of the nomination of W. C. Bristol to be district attorney of Oregon. A subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday made an adverse report on it to the full committee. The fight has been a bitter one, and went so far as to include charges by Bristol's friends implicating Senator Fulton in the land frauds of Oregon to the extent of attributing his antagonism to Bristol to an effort to prevent prosecution of some of his personal friends. The action of the subcommittee is taken as a complete vindication of Senator Fulton from these charges.

Assigns All to His Creditors.

Alleging depression in business and not being able to make satisfactory collections for the purpose of meeting his obligations, William Redmond yesterday made an assignment of all his personal and real estate property to Attorney Hayden Johnson in favor and for the benefit of his creditors. Redmond's liabilities are stated at \$4,543.07 and his assets at about \$3,000.

Architects Elect Officers.

The annual meeting of the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects was held in the Octagon. The following officers were elected: President, E. W. Donn, Jr.; vice president, William J. Marsh; treasurer, F. E. Pyrie; secretary, Percy Ash; committee on admissions, J. R. Marshall, Robert Stead, and Snowden Ashford.

Needs Additional Appropriation.

Dr. P. G. Smith, superintendent of the Home for the Aged and Infirm, has requested the Commissioners to include an item of \$3,500 in the deficiency bill for contingent expenses of that institution. According to Dr. Smith, the additional appropriation is necessary to meet the running expenses for the balance of the fiscal year 1907.

Will Investigate Ute Trouble.

Capt. Carter P. Johnson, of the Tenth Cavalry, yesterday was appointed a special commissioner to proceed to Utah and South Dakota for the purpose of investigating the causes of the dissatisfaction among the Utes who recently went on the war trail from their reservation.

SOUTH AGAINST FORAKER.

He Is to Have No Delegates Because He Denounced Secession.

Chattanooga, Tenn., Jan. 21.—"Foraker

must receive no votes in the next Republican national convention from the Southern States" is the edict that has been received from Washington throughout this section.

The edict comes, as have all others that have been received from the administration in the past, not in writing, but by word of mouth from prominent Republicans who have recently been in Washington. They say this course is prompted on account of a speech made by Senator Foraker in October last, in which he declared that the whole proceeding of secession was "causeless, indefensible, and grotesquely absurd." He is weak with the party in this section, although no Republican will be quoted on the edict, all admit that none of the Southern States will be found in the Foraker columns.

ASSESSMENT INSURANCE.

Proposed That It Shall Be Regulated Under Legal Supervision.

Senator Gallinger, in the Senate, and Representative Babcock, in the House, introduced yesterday a bill to regulate assessment, sick, accident, and death insurance companies in the District.

The bill requires such companies to deposit with the District government United States railroad or municipal bonds to the amount of \$50,000, where policies up to and not exceeding \$1,000 are written, and to the amount of \$100,000 where larger policies are written.

Such insurance companies must have \$100,000 paid up capital stock. They are to be required to make an annual report to the District government on March 1 for the year ending December 31, preceding, showing every feature of their business, and that they have paid all policies at their face. The forms of policies must be approved by the superintendent of insurance.

If the value of the bonds deposited by any company falls below that at which they are appraised when first deposited, the superintendent is empowered to require that additional security be deposited. All policies are to be paid within thirty days of the time they are due, or the license of the company is to be forfeited. The terms of the bill are not to apply to any fraternal association or any such organization in the army or navy, or to the employees of any firm or corporation.

NEW HOTEL PLAN ACCEPTED

Congress Hall Company Completes Arrangements to Build.

Contract Awarded and Deed of Trust for \$100,000 Is Placed on Record.

The Congress Hall Hotel Company has completed arrangements to erect a new hotel on its property, bounded by New Jersey avenue, South Capitol and C streets southeast. Plans for the structure have been selected, and the contract awarded to James L. Parsons, who will proceed to erect the building as quickly as possible. The hotel will be six stories

high, and will contain 1,000 rooms. The contract was awarded to James L. Parsons, who will proceed to erect the building as quickly as possible. The hotel will be six stories high, and will contain 1,000 rooms.

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SAWS PRISON BARS

Edwin Letchemere Worked While in District Prison.

ALMOST GAINED HIS LIBERTY

Obtained Razor Blade Through Friends and Makes Saw from Spring in His Shoe—Had Made His Way to Outside Corridors Before He Was Discovered by Officials.

It developed yesterday that Edwin Letchemere, who was arrested here recently on the charge of robbing the National Museum, gave the officials of the District Jail a good demonstration of his ability as a jail breaker before being sent back to Cincinnati. It was only yesterday that fact was made known.

Letchemere was arrested on January 8, and given a hearing a few days later. He was held for the action of the grand jury.

As a result of a canvass by Capt. Boardman, of the police, it was found that besides being wanted in New York, Chicago, and St. Louis for petit misdemeanors, he was also wanted in Cincinnati for breaking jail on December 22, 1906. The police of that city asked that he be surrendered to them as their prisoner. As a matter of courtesy, customary in such cases, the authorities here consented to the extradition and asked that an officer be sent on to escort him back to that city.

Anticipating conviction, probably, Letchemere must have immediately set to work to make his escape. Warden Harris, aware of this fact, directed that he be placed in one of the strongest cells in the prison. These cells, however, are very old, having been installed when the jail was built, more than thirty years ago, and were fitted with iron bars instead of steel.

Guards Were Sick.

Owing to the fact that several of the guards were on the sick list last week, the customary examinations of the bars were omitted for a day or so. It was during this time that Letchemere fell to work sawing his way out.

When James Caragan, a guard, made his round early Friday morning, he noticed several marks and scratches on the wall just below the window of Letchemere's cell, which opened out into the corridor. He stopped to investigate, and found that besides this, one of the bars of the lower section of the window grating had been completely sawed through. The break made by the instrument used had been covered over with soap.

The guard, excited, saw that the prisoner was still in his cell, and notified Warden Harris of his find. Mr. Harris immediately directed that Letchemere be placed in another cell, and began a thorough examination to find how the man had sawed his way through the iron.

In searching the prisoner's bed a razor blade and a thin piece of steel, several inches in length,